THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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HD **Morning Update: Ottawa tried to rebuild diplomatic ties with North Korea, documents reveal; Throughout the fall of 2018, senior Canadian and North Korean officials held secret meetings, which led to a plan for "enhanced diplomatic engagement" between the two countries**

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Good morning,

As U.S. President Donald Trump tried to build a relationship with North Korea in 2018, Ottawa was quietly developing a strategy of its own to diplomatically re-engage with the authoritarian regime , according to documents obtained by The Globe and Mail.

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Throughout the fall of 2018, senior Canadian and North Korean officials held secret meetings, which led to a a plan for "enhanced diplomatic engagement" between the two countries. The documents reveal that a North Korea task force was set up inside Global Affairs, and some files suggest Canada was even studying the possibility of reopening its embassy in Pyongyang.

While North Korean representatives have made unofficial visits to Canada before, the secret talks represent the highest level of engagement in years. Canada has not had full diplomatic relations with North Korea since the Korean War.

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B.C. election results could be delayed by at least two weeks

Elections BC is working to make on-site voting stations safer, but it says surveys conducted during the summer indicate 30 to 35 per cent of ballots could be mailed in for the Oct. 24 election, up from 1 per cent of votes cast by mail in previous elections.

That could delay the results of the British Columbia election by at least two weeks because, under the Elections Act, counting of mail-in ballots can only begin 13 days after voting day, and the final count takes two to three days.

"It is possible there will be a delay before the final results are known. Our commitment, again, is to make sure the count is conducted as quickly as possible," Chief Electoral Officer Anton Boegman said.

Fight at the museum: In Montreal, a feud between an acclaimed curator and the board that fired her enters a new stage

Nathalie Bondil built the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts into one of Quebec's crown jewels and an institution known around the world for its innovative programs. So it came as a shock to many when she was dismissed from her positions as general director and chief curator. Yet the museum's board said a dysfunctional work environment made it impossible to keep her.

Current and former staff complain that Bondil involved herself in every detail of exhibition and gallery planning to the point of disrespecting her curators and rearranging or planning installations without consulting them, while causing significant delays and cost overruns.

The public battle between Bondil and the museum's board has forced Canada's corporate captains, cultural philanthropists and arts mavens to take sides while foreign museums watch with interest.

Got a news tip that you'd like us to look into? E-mail us at tips@globeandmail.com Need to share documents securely? Reach out via SecureDrop

ALSO ON OUR RADAR

Trudeau plans television address after Throne Speech: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will address Canadians in a national broadcast Wednesday evening, just hours after his government is scheduled to unveil its updated policy agenda in a Speech from the Throne. The rare address will include a summary of the government's plans in the Throne Speech to fight the virus and to plan for an economic recovery, Trudeau's spokesperson said.

Campbell Clark: A prime minister in two minds picks a path forward

Canadian Museum of History president on leave amid harassment investigation: Mark O'Neill, the president of the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, is on leave as both institutions investigate allegations of workplace harassment. The investigation is the second to hit a national museum this year. In June, current and former employees at the Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg raised concerns of systemic racism, homophobia and workplace issues at their institution.

Last British Hong Kong governor calls for nations to stand up to China: The last British governor of Hong Kong is calling on Canada and other countries to take joint action against China's crackdown on civil rights in the Asian city. "... we should call them out collectively or otherwise they will pick us off one at a time," Chris Patten said on a web teleconference hosted by Canadian and U.K. think tanks.

Indigo's Heather Reisman on balancing e-commerce development with bricks-and-mortar: COVID-19 took a toll on retailers, but for Indigo Books & Music the timing of the pandemic was especially bad. The company, which was in the midst of a transition when the pandemic hit, now faces more upheaval as it looks to lure back in-store customers and boost the digital side of the business.

Stepping Up: With season cancelled, ecotourism group tackles marine waste: In normal summers, Kevin Smith and the crew from his ship would show tourists the beauty and culture of the Great Bear Rainforest region of B.C.'s coast. But because of COVID-19, this summer was different. So Smith and his team found a new purpose: to clean up a remote coast littered with marine debris and plastic garbage.

This is part of Stepping Up, a series introducing Canadians to their country's new sources of inspiration and leadership.

MORNING MARKETS

Tech lifts world stocks as economy back in focus: World shares stabilized and the U.S. dollar rose on Wednesday with overnight gains of stay-at-home Wall Street tech champions helping balance concerns that new restrictions to counter resurging coronavirus infections will hurt economic recovery. Around 6 a.m. ET, Britain's FTSE 100 was up 2.26 per cent. Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40 gained 1.71 per cent and 1.89 per cent, respectively. In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng closed up 0.11 per cent. Japan's Nikkei slid 0.06 per cent. New York futures were higher. The Canadian dollar was trading at 75.08 US cents.

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

Andrew Coyne : "For cynics, the lesson is this: Never try. Of course governments aren't going to obey their own laws, they snort – what did you expect? So when our leaders pass, then ignore, legislation binding them to fixed election dates or balanced budgets or ethical behaviour, the world-weary blame not the lawbreakers but the laws."

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Colin Robertson : “We need a China policy based on realism, one that is neither complacent nor paranoid. China is our second-largest trading partner. It is our second-largest source of foreign students. Nearly two million Canadians claim Chinese descent. A systemic examination of the relationship involving independent research will complement the work of parliamentarians.”

Konrad Yakabuski : “Mr. Trump’s fiscal recklessness would be a ballot question in the presidential election were it not for, well, everything else. Seemingly more urgent issues, from the pandemic itself to the nomination of a new Supreme Court judge and racial unrest, have dominated the campaign. But a postelection budget reckoning faces whoever wins in November.”

TODAY’S EDITORIAL CARTOON

LIVING BETTER

Watch the Globe Book Club with Thomas King in conversation with Margaret Atwood

Join authors Margaret Atwood and Thomas King as they discuss King’s career, focusing on his just-published novel Indians on Vacation, his Taylor Prize-winning The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America, and Obsidian, the latest in his Thumps DreadfulWater mystery series. You can catch the Globe Book Club livestream on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 7:30 p.m. ET.

MOMENT IN TIME: SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

Greta Thunberg speaks at UN Climate Action Summit in New York

On Sept. 20, 2019, hundreds of thousands of young people around the world took part in a global climate strike. They marched in cities like Melbourne, Berlin, Nairobi and New York to demand greater action on climate change from their political leaders. Meanwhile, international politicians were preparing to gather in New York for the United Nations' Climate Action Summit. Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teen activist who sparked the global protest movement, had sailed 15 days across the Atlantic Ocean to attend the conference. On this day in 2019, Ms. Thunberg attended the summit and delivered a powerful speech that narrated the climate anxieties of a generation. “People are suffering, people are dying, entire ecosystems are collapsing,” Ms. Thunberg told leaders. “We are at the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of endless economic growth. How dare you!” In her four-minute speech, Ms. Thunberg pleaded for swift action to reduce global gas emissions. “The young people are starting to understand your betrayal,” Ms. Thunberg said. “The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.” Mugoli Samba

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